Photo Cordaid

SCORE

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY IN EMERGENCIES

After disaster strikes, there are a million things happening all at once. Amid the chaos and panic, it becomes crucial to prioritise your actions and be well-prepared in your response to urgent needs and a variety of possible scenarios.

Often calamities occur in places where professional local organisations are not only present but the first to respond. But while these local organisations might be specialised in their field of development work, in many cases a sound emergency preparedness plan and emergency response capacity are lacking.

Firmly believing that localising humanitarian aid enhances the effectiveness of humanitarian responses, the SCORE project promotes a leading role for local actors by strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations to respond effectively to crises.

Funded by the European Union, as a part of its EU Aid Volunteer Initiative, SCORE is a consortium project led by Trócaire in collaboration with Cordaid and 12 civil society organisations in DRC, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone.

THE PROJECT FOCUSES ON

- Emergency preparedness and contingency planning;
- Rapid response capacity, including needs assessments and use of new modalities in humanitarian assistance, such as cash, and digital data collection to ensure local actors keep up to speed with new developments;
- Understanding and complying with quality standards in humanitarian assistance like the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, as well as standards in protection mainstreaming, staff and volunteer conduct, care and management.

To achieve this the project delivers training as well as organisational development and coaching. It also comprises good practices, exchange visits, e-modules and simulation exercises. Learning with and from each other plays a key role in the project.

EXPERIENCES

Gemechu Birhanu, director of the Oromia Pastoralist Association

Why SCORE?

"We are a small organisation, with limited emergency response capacities. SCORE came at the right moment."

Results

"After the trainings we improved our organisational guidelines and procedures and our staff had increased humanitarian skills.

For example, we provide cash support to women and children who are survivors of gender-based violence. Before SCORE, we followed a time-consuming and tiresome procedure that did not protect the client's confidentiality very well, with case information and forms going through three or four different hands for approval. Today a maximum of 2 core staff handles the case and the decision to provide cash support is taken much faster.

We have also professionalized our data collection, for rapid needs assessments, for monitoring, reporting and reprogramming purposes. Core staff have received tablets and software training, allowing them to collect COVID-19 and locusts invasion impact and needs assessments quicker and more accurately. Especially among pastoralist, traveling communities, swift and accurate paper-free data collection is very helpful."

Challenges

"Half a year after we started, COVID-19 came in and a lot of workshops and trainings were canceled. It complicated and slowed things down. At the same time, SCORE equipped us to better address the needs of communities who feel the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. And, in a twist of fate, COVID-19 has made it easier for us to access and follow-up on the migrating pastoralist communities we reach out to. Being locked down, swe can trace them more easily."

SCORE as a stepping stone

"SCORE is more a process rather than a project. We need to continuously plan, implement, monitor and improve. For some of this, you need extra money and resources. For a lot of things, like confidentiality, staff security, accountability, it is also a question of reusing resources you already have. SCORE has instilled and inspired us to think and act in this way."

EPP Training with Core Staff-Nov 18-20-2020 at OPA Head Office-Addis Ababa

Ibrahim Fatu Kamara, Programme Director, Action for Advocacy and Development

Why SCORE?

"As a capacity building project, SCORE contributes to strengthen the capacity of local organisations and staff to be able to effectively respond to emergencies."

Results

"20 of our staff have been trained on creating an emergency preparedness plan. We now have a reviewed working document and we have an emergency response team in place. Also, 9 staff have been trained on a cash transfer programme and 12 of us have been trained on CommCare, a data collection tool. After a flood in the Mabanta community in 2019 we were able to put the skills we had acquired during the cash transfer training into practice. This resulted in a successful intervention there."

Challenges

"During the Mabanta response, one of the challenges we faced was a delay in the transfer of funds, which affected a timely response. Also, the community was difficult to access because the floods had cut off roads and bridges. There was a risk of losing our materials as people had to cross through the water while carrying the supplies."

SCORE as a stepping stone

"We will need support from an external technical person to review and mainstream our cash transfer programme for a clear guide going forward. Our SCORE participation showed us that we need to incorporate emergency response mechanisms in our strategy and policies. And that we need further support to do this. SCORE has been essential in putting in place an emergency preparedness plan. We need to build on that to further strengthen our emergency response capacities and to contribute to locally led responses."

Ibrahim Fatu Kamara

EXPERIENCES

RWANDA

Judith Mukeshimana, Technical Advisor Humanitarian Aid, Trocaire

Why SCORE?

"Being in the region of the great lakes, Rwanda has to deal with natural disasters, such as floods, landslides and heavy rainfall. And then there are the conflicts in neighbouring countries, which lead to people having to flee violence and seek refuge. We have six refugee settlements in Rwanda. To respond effectively to these challenges, we need strong local organizations. We need to strengthen their capacity in terms of strategy, skills, materials, mechanisms, and knowledge."

Results

"I am very happy with our accomplishments. Before we launched SCORE, both partners I work with had very little experience and their understanding of emergency preparedness was quite low. Now, after the trainings they have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective. I feel very confident about the results of our efforts.

At the end of September 2020, we will go back to each partner and through a capacity assessment we will found out the true outcome of the trainings."

Challenges

"COVID-19 has impacted our work. To give an example: we had planned to do an emergency preparedness simulation which required us to go to the field. We had to cancel this field visit due to the measures against the spread of the virus and have now switched to online simulation sessions."

SCORE as a stepping stone

"The partners I work with rely for the funding on development programmes. The next step would be to develop a clear funding strategy for humanitarian interventions as well. They need that specific funding to be able to respond. Secondly, they need to become part of the mechanism of humanitarian working groups in Rwanda, which are led by the government. Our partners need to be engaged in that mechanism because that is where decisions are being made regarding transferring knowledge, funds, and financial capacity. They have started the process, but this requires more funding. You cannot go to the ministry and asked to be involved in the working groups when you do not have an action plan. And for an action plan you need money."

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Thierry Metre, SCORE Focal Point, Cordaid

Why SCORE?

"Since 2017 disasters in our country tend to increase in frequency and amplitude. In the first days and weeks, when people are dying or trying to survive, we can't just wait for international aid agencies to come and act. We would lose precious time. We, local humanitarians who know the cultural, social, political, and geographical context best, need to be able to rapidly access crisis areas, assess needs, and save lives ourselves. This is what SCORE is about."

Results

"SCORE supported 3 multisectoral humanitarian partners in South and North Kivu: Caritas Bukavu, MAAMS and PADEBU. These partners strengthened their capacities in the following fields of emergency preparedness planning, protection mainstreaming, fast and accurate needs assessments and cash transfer programming. They have also adapted their emergency preparedness plans to COVID-19 and a workshop in digital data collection and rapid needs assessments has significantly increased their speed and effectiveness."

Challenges

"The biggest challenge of local organisations is their lack of financial means. SCORE allows them to develop emergency preparedness plans, but they still lack the means to implement them fully. They now have tablets to assess needs effectively, but not enough means to address them. Hopefully, now that with SCORE they are better able to respond, they will increase their chances to raise funds.

SCORE as a stepping stone

"First of all, local SCORE participants need to lobby for more direct funding. This allows them not only to learn, but also to act. Secondly, accountability mechanisms of humanitarians towards the communities they reach out to need to be integrated in all phases of the operations. Citizens need to be able to follow the money. Full transparency is the best way to fight corruption. Lastly, lobby and advocacy toward governments is part and parcel of humanitarian work.

Thierry Metre

These should be the next steps of SCORE participants. Take the aspect of accessibility. If roads are impassable, or if there are no humanitarian corridors to save the lives of besieged communities, local humanitarians need to know how to effectively knock on the doors of top decision-makers."

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Democratic Republic of Congo
Caritas Bukavu, Maams, Padebu.

Ethiopia
OPA, Agri Service Ethiopia, Aged and Children Pastoralists Association (ACPA), Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA), Rural Agency for Community Initiatives Development and Assistance (RACIDA).

Rwanda
Association Rwandaise des Conseillers en Traumatisma (ARCT Ruhuka), Duhamic Adri.

Sierra Leone
Action for Advocacy and Development (AAD), Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (KADDRO).

FACTS & FIGURES

- From February 1, 2019 until November 30, 2020
- 4 countries
- Budget of € 820.000
- 12 participating local civil society organisations

RESULTS

The partners have been trained and supported in:

- emergency preparedness and contingency planning;
- conducting ongoing analysis of localised risks;
- tracking trends and early warnings;
- embedding protection mainstreaming principles into preparedness activities;
- using digital technologies for data collection and analysis;
- using cash-based interventions;
- managing staff and volunteers;
- documenting best practices and lessons learnt.

ABOUT TRÓCAIRE

Trócaire is an Irish aid en development organisation, established in 1973. Their dual mandate is to support the most vulnerable people in the developing world, while also raising awareness of injustice and global poverty in Ireland.
Trócaire works with local partners to support communities in over 20 developing countries with a focus on food and resource rights, women's empowerment and humanitarian response.

ABOUT CORDAID

As an aid and development organisation from the Netherlands, Cordaid works to end poverty and exclusion. They do this in the world's most fragile and conflict-affected areas.
Cordaid engages communities to rebuild trust and resilience and increase people's self-reliance. Their professionals provide humanitarian assistance and create opportunities to improve security, health care and education and stimulate inclusive economic growth.

The SCORE Project covers humanitarian aid activities implemented with the financial assistance of the European Union. The subject matter and opinions addressed should not be taken, in any way, to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

The SCORE project is organised and coordinated by

Cordaid

Trócaire

Funded by

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We Care, We Act

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"SCORE is a unique project. It has allowed us to pilot a new, robust set of capacity strengthening methodologies for 12 local organisations across four countries. We have seen the positive impact. All of our partners have used what they learnt through SCORE in various emergency responses. One local partner led on both an anticipatory fund for flooding and an actual flooding response funded by the START Fund in Rwanda. Two partners in Sierra Leone led the COVID-19 response in their respective localities, coordinating with other INGOs. Naturally, the exchange of capacities , experiences and learnings between international and local organisations has been a key driver. The project leads by example of how capacity strengthening work should be done and, ultimately, why they should be funded. The Grand Bargain, a charter of the main donors and implementing agencies to improve the effectiveness of the humanitarian aid system and to get more means into the hands of local responders, underlines the importance to invest in the capacities of local actors. SCORE is an example of how to deliver on this."

Priya Joshi, Project Coordinator SCORE